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SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE OIC LAYS OUT PLANS FOR  
EXPANDED COOPERATION

¶1. (SBU) Summary: U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber used his July 22 meetings with representatives of various OIC missions represented in Geneva to highlight his plans for greater USG-OIC dialogue. All his interlocutors expressed enthusiasm for the idea and urged better engagement on a wide range of issues. Cumber laid out his hopes for agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the OIC and the USG; his interlocutors welcomed the MOU, stressing the importance of broader cooperation on development, good governance and other elements of that proposed agreement.  
END SUMMARY.

S/E CUMBER LAYS OUT PLANS  
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¶2. (U) U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber met June 22 with ambassadors and other officials of Pakistan (which serves as OIC coordinator on human rights), Malaysia, Indonesia, Senegal, Turkey, Afghanistan and the OIC delegation. In all his meetings, Cumber explained his role and plans as Special Envoy, introduced the USG proposal for an MOU with the OIC, and laid the groundwork for broader USG-OIC dialogue, with a special focus on both expanded contacts with OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu and with Geneva human rights delegations.

PAKISTAN  
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¶3. (SBU) Pakistani Ambassador Masood Khan welcomed the appointment of a special envoy to the OIC and favored dialogue as the best way to avoid working at cross purposes "deliberately or inadvertently." He noted that SecGen Ihsanoglu served as a helpful bridge between OIC and European mindsets. Although many countries seek broader ties with the OIC, the U.S. was in a particularly strong position given the inclusiveness of U.S. society. Welcoming the MOU between the USG and the OIC on socio-economic issues, Khan said the OIC was working constructively to address many concerns, including human rights in OIC countries. He spoke of making room to reframe the defamation of religion debate in less contentious terms. Khan welcomed the call of the previous High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, for more dialogue this year on freedom of expression. Khan offered to help coordinate further meetings with OIC missions in Geneva on Cumber's future visits.

MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA  
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¶4. (SBU) Meetings with the ambassadors of Malaysia and Indonesia also focused on the need for improved dialogue on contentious issues. Malaysian Ambassador Hsu King Bee said defamation of religion was a key issue in Geneva human rights fora and called for balanced attention to freedom and to responsibilities and for acknowledgment of anti-Muslim prejudice in the world. Indonesian Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja called for interfaith dialogue to address these issues.

#### SENEGAL AND THE OIC

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¶5. (SBU) In a meeting with Senegalese Ambassador Babacar Carlos Mbaye, Cumber stressed the need for strong moderate leaders among the 27 OIC members from Africa, and expressed hope that Senegal would play a leadership role among moderate African delegations. Mbaye responded by noting that Senegal's president relies on the OIC to encourage progress in the Islamic world, including at a recent OIC conference held in Dakar. Mbaye lauded the draft MOU and favored engagement with all stakeholders, especially moderate Muslims.

¶6. (SBU) In a meeting with the Ambassador of the OIC in Geneva, Babacar Ba (from Senegal), Cumber discussed the broad range of initiatives that fall under the MOU he was crafting and urged USG coordination with the OIC's own ten-year plan. They discussed the need for better educational institutions in Islamic countries and the OIC's initiatives to address such problems as polio eradication and economic development.

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Commenting that he had worried that establishing a U.S. Special Envoy to the OIC would be a perfunctory gesture of engagement, Ba said he now recognized that dialogue with Cumber could bear fruit and looked forward to him continuing in his active consultations.

#### TURKEY

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¶7. (SBU) In a meeting with Turkish charge Asligul Ugdul and Political Counselor Yonca Ozceri, Cumber stressed the pivotal role that Turkey could play in pushing other countries to learn from their example as a secular Islamic state and called for inclusive interfaith dialogue. Commenting that the new U.S. approach was "better late than never," Ugdul noted the idiosyncrasies of Turkey's position between the OIC and Europe. Ozceri pointed out that Turkey had always supported both sides of the defamation question: the EU's desire to prevent incitement to hatred and violence and the OIC's desire to stop all defamation of Islam. Cumber said that stronger civil society structures in Muslim societies would offer a healthier response to religious intolerance than does the fight over defamation of religion. Ozceri replied that the international community must find a way to address religion-based phobias; the UN was the only place to openly discuss the question, and Geneva's Human Rights Council was the place to address the technicalities of that discussion.

#### AFGHANISTAN

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¶8. (SBU) Afghan Ambassador Nangayulai Tarzi saw the need to empower what he and Cumber both termed a "silent majority" in the OIC; many OIC members disagree with the organization's more vocal bullies but were constrained by domestic public opinion and other factors from blocking those bullies from pursuing their more strident and harmful objectives. Tarzi noted that closed and open votes produced very different results among OIC states and said moderates should use procedural maneuvering to pursue their goals. Muslim countries also need to continue using education and other means to counter radical interpretations of Islam, Tarzi

argued, pointing to huge increases in child enrollment in education since the fall of the Taliban as a positive trend. Tarzi also said that to be truly effective, the OIC would need a real budget, more political will from its members, and a staff of permanent personnel.

¶9. (U) Cleared by Sada Cumber.  
TICHENOR